[English]

Bomb Explosion

3294. SHRI JAYSINH CHAUHAN :
SHRI K.S. RAYUDU :
SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN :
SHRI BANWARI LAL PUROHIT :
PROF. OMPAL SINGH NIDAR :
SHRI PRABHU DAYAL KATHERIA :
KUMARI UMA BHARATI :
DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEY :
SHRI S.P. JAISWAL :
SHRI G.A. CHARAN REDDY :
SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL :
SHRI D.P. YADAV :

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a powerful bomb exploded in a local train at Lehra Khana Railway Station in Bhatinda, Punjab on July 8, 1997;

(b) if so, the number of persons injured/killed in the blast;

(c) whether the Government are aware that the ISI activities in the country are destablising the nation by planting bombs etc. in trains;

(d) whether the involvement of ISI has been found in the said bomb blast in Punjab and recent bomb explosion in Delhi; and

(e) the steps proposed to be taken by the Government to prevent such type of sabotage in future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MQHD. MAQBOOL DAR) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) In the blast at Lehra Khana Railway Station in Bhatinda as many as 38 persons were killed while 67 persons were injured.

(c) Government is aware that under its current game plan, Pak. ISI has made fresh efforts to forge linkage between Punjab militants and insurgent groups of Jammu & Kashmir, fundamentalists groups and mercenaries to widen the arc of militancy in India. The recent incidents of bomb blasts in trains/terrorism in Punjab can be attributed to such an effort. However, adequate counter measures and coordinated efforts have been initiated to defeat such designs.

(d) Investigating teams of Punjab police investigating the Bhatinda train blast and Bagha Purana shoot out (which took place on 09.07.97) have achieved a major break through with the arrest of one Buta Singh, an active conspirator aligned with International Sikh Youth Federation led by Pakistan based terrorist Lakhbir Singh Rode. The prime accused in the case Bhupinder Singh & Bhinda R/o Mari Mustafa PS Bagha Purana District Moga is however absconding. Efforts are on to nab him.

(e) To prevent acts of sabotage and to counter various activities of Pak ISI, the following steps have been taken:—

(i) States/UTs have been requested to maintain extra vigil at public places such as Bus Stands, Railway Stations, Cinema Halls etc. and general public have been alerted about suspicious objects lying unattended at these places.

(ii) Regular exchange of intelligence takes place between the States on the one hand and between these States and the Central Intelligence agencies on the other.

(iii) Barbed wire fencing and flood lighting on Indo-Pak border in Punjab (except some riverine gaps) and along major parts of border in Rajasthan has been erected. On the line of control and the International Border in the J&K which is a major source of infiltration from across the border, deployment of Army and BSF units have been strengthened on infiltration routes and in interior areas as a second line of defence.

(iv) Effective vigilance all along the Indo-Pak border is maintained through patrolling by BSF with additional support from state police.

(v) Militant cadres in J&K have suffered heavy casualties and many outfits have lost their top ranking leaders. In Punjab, a break-through has been achieved in many recent cases and several suspects of left over Punjab militants group who have cross-border linkages, have been arrested.

(vi) Vigilance along Indo-Nepal border is also being strengthened.

[Translation]

Animal Species

3295. SHRI ANANT KUMAR HEGDE : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state: